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153 laughing and called to me: 'Don't believe her, she's much too small.'
867 But these innocent fabrications illustrate the contents of children's
155 identifications with adults.[1]

861 *Co-operation.* Mention has previously been made of children's
153 co-operation in the ordinary social and particularly economic activities in a manner and to an extent commensurate with their maturity at the time. But it must be referred to again in order to emphasize why it is specially important for children's learning. The little girl who goes with her mother to the water-hole and is given a tiny pot of water to carry is making only an infinitesimal contribution to the household's water supply. Yet it is a real contribution. She learns to carry her little pot of water in relation to a real need of the household. The boy at a sacrifice called to hold the leg of a carcass while it is skinned not only receives his first lessons in anatomy thus; he is performing a task necessary for the completion of the ceremony. The children summoned to carry balls of swish for the men building a house are contributing valuable labour. The child's training in duty and skill is always socially productive and therefore psychologically worth while to him; it can never become artificial or boring.

Yet as long as the child's co-operation is limited to subsidiary assistance—that is, until he reaches adolescence—it includes an element emanating from the child's own psychology, an element of play. Upon the adult Talaŋa the economic system bears down with a disciplinary and constraining effect. The house must be built, plastered, and thatched in time, before the rains come; the crops must be planted, hoed, harvested at the right moment, and the penalty for negligence is severe. The child cannot yet experience this. Its co-operation is still partly wish-fulfilment and has for it the attractions of an imaginative experiment. Thus, whenever there is building in progress, they play at building as well as help carrying swish; and the play part is for the child of equal importance with the work.

153 *Play in relation to social development.* The concept of play (*ba deemrome*,
● 524 'they are playing') is well defined and clearly recognized by the
[524]

[1] This exposition of identification is over-simplified in order not to burden the general argument. In Taleland, as elsewhere, it is not the sole determinant of character formation. It has been stressed here in order to underline its educational importance.

1 [A Kind of mud mortar -- Analyst]

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[828] Tallensi. The play of Tale children, it has been pointed out, emerges
153 partly as a side-issue of their practical activities. It is also an end in
●524 itself, and has a noteworthy role in their social development. In his play the child rehearses his interests, skills, and obligations, and makes experiments in social living without having to pay the penalty for mistakes. Hence there is always a phase of play in the evolution of any schema preceding its full emergence into practical life. Play, therefore, is often mimetic in content, and expresses the child's identifications. But the Tale child's play mimesis is never simple and mechanical reproduction; it is always imaginative construction based on the themes of adult life and of the life of slightly older children. He or she adapts natural objects and other materials, often with great ingenuity, which never occur in the adult activities copied, and rearranges adult functions to fit the specific logical and affective configuration of play.[1]

128 *A typical play situation.* How vividly these motifs appear in the play
524 of Tale children will be evident to the reader if I describe shortly an actual play situation as I observed and recorded it. I shall describe a typical play episode among children at the transition from infantile egocentricity and dependence to social play and participation in peripheral economic activities. It will be noted how recreational and imaginative play are interwoven with practical activities and how infantile habits still persist. The children's interests fluctuate from moment to moment, egocentric attitudes alternate with co-operative play, and the economic task receives only sporadic attention. Later on we shall consider these factors in relation to the phases of development of children's play.

524 On a morning in June I found Gəmna, aged about 7, his half-sister
867 Zəŋ, aged about 6, and his friend Zoo of about the same age out
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[1] In this respect Tale children resemble our own children; cf. S. Isaacs, *Intellectual Growth in Young Children*, pp. 99–102. She sums up: 'Imaginative play builds a bridge by which the child can pass from the symbolic values of things to active inquiry into their real construction and real way of working. . . . In his imaginative play the child recreates selectively those elements in past situations which can embody his emotional and intellectual need of the present, and he adapts the details moment by moment to the present situation. . . .' Cf. also the same author's *Social Development in Young Children*, p. 425, 'Play . . . is supremely the activity which brings him [the child] psychic equilibrium in the early years.'

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Plate IV

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Building Play. In the background a newly built room. On the right of the group a big boy demonstrating to a small boy. Behind them part of a 'house' they have finished. On the left, girls making the swish and explaining the process to the ethnographer's wife.

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Learning Marksmanship. Note how intently the two smaller boys, who have only recently acquired real bows, are watching the technique of their older companion

[facing p. 49]

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524 scaring birds on the home farm. They sat astride the trailing branch
867 of a baobab tree on the boundary of Gəmna's father's farm and Zoo's
868 father's farm. They slid down to talk to me, and a bigger lad, Təŋ,
857 aged about 10, joined us. Gəmna had wandered off a few yards and now came running up with three locusts. He called to his sister and Zoo. Eagerly they squatted round the locusts. 'These are our cows,' said Gəmna, 'let's build a yard for them.' Zoo and the little girl foraged around and produced a few pieces of decayed bark. The children, Gəmna dominant, giving orders and keeping up a running commentary, set about building a 'cattle-yard' of the pieces of bark. Təŋ, the older boy, also squatted down to help. He and Gəmna constructed an irregular rectangle with one side open of the pieces of bark. Zoo fetched some more pieces of bark which Təŋ used to roof the yard. The little girl stood looking on. Gəmna carefully pushed the locusts in, one by one, and declared, 'We must make a gateway.' Rummaging about, the boys found two pebbles which they set up as gate-posts, with much argument as to how they ought to stand. Suddenly the whole structure collapsed and Təŋ started putting it up again. The little girl meanwhile had found a pair of stones and a potsherd and was on her knees, 'grinding grain'. Suddenly the two small boys dashed off into the growing grain, shouting to scare the birds. In a minute or two they returned to squat by the collapsed 'cattle-yard'. They appeared to have forgotten all about the 'cows', for they were engrossed in a conversation about 'wrestling'. Some one called Təŋ, who departed. Zəŋ, finishing her 'grinding', came up to the boys with the 'flour' on a potsherd and said, 'Let's sacrifice to our shrine.' Gəmna said indifferently, 'Let Zoo do it.' Zoo declared that Gəmna was senior to him, and an argument ensued as to who was senior. Eventually Gəmna asserted, 'I'm the senior.' Zəŋ meanwhile had put down her 'flour' which
[526] was quite forgotten; for Zoo challenged Gəmna's assertion. Gəmna retorted that he was undoubtedly senior since he could throw Zoo in wrestling. Zoo denied this, and in a few minutes they were grappling each other. Gəmna managed to throw Zoo and rolled over him; but they stood up in perfectly good temper, panting and proud. Suddenly with a shout Gəmna began to scramble up the baobab branch, followed by Zoo, calling out, 'Let's swing.' For a minute or two

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they rocked back and forth on the branch and then descended. Now Gəmna remembered his cows. Vehemently he accused his sister of having taken them, and when she denied this challenged her to 'swear'. 'All right,' she said placidly. Gəmna took a pinch of sand in his left hand and put his right thumb on it. Zəŋ licked her thumb and pressed down with it on Gəmna's thumb-nail. He stood still a moment, then suddenly withdrew his thumb. (This is a children's play ordeal.) Gəmna examined his sister's thumb and found sand adhering. 'There you are,' he said, rapping her on the head with a crooked finger. The 'cows' were completely forgotten though, for now they turned their attention to me, asking me various questions. After a while Gəmna, who had been observing my shoes, said, 'Let's make shoes,' and took a couple of pieces of the decayed bark previously used to build the cattle-yard to make shoes. He and Zəŋ found some grass and old string lying about and tried to tie the pieces of bark to the soles of their feet. Gəmna now noticed his 'cows' and picked them up, but he was still trying to make 'shoes'. The 'shoes' refused to hold together so he abandoned them and squatted over his 'cows' for a moment, moving them hither and thither. 'I'm going to let them copulate,' he burst out with a grin, and tried to put one locust on top of another. Looking up, he noticed a flutter of birds' wings. 'Zəŋ,' he cried, jumping to his feet, 'scare the birds!' and he raced into the grain, followed by his companions, shouting and stooping to pick up handfuls of gravel to fling at the birds. For the next five minutes they were engrossed in bird-scaring. The entire episode lasted over half an hour.

The developmental phases of play. Infant play. Up to the age of 6 or 7 a good deal of play, especially that of boys, consists in sheer motor exuberance. Small boys run about, leap and prance for the pleasure of it, frequently in a totally unorganized way. But even 3-year-old boys often introduce mimetic themes, spontaneously or in response to suggestions from older children. They 'ride horses', using a long stick as a horse, with a wisp of grass attached as bridle. In the Festival season they love 'playing drums'. Cylindrical tins discarded by our cook and useless as receptacles were in great demand for this purpose. A remnant of goatskin tied over one end with a strip of bark or grass makes a satisfactory diaphragm, and a hooked twig

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524 serves as a drumstick. Often an older boy of 8 or 9 manufactures a
534 toy drum for himself or an infant brother. A small discarded calabash
857 is covered with a piece of skin—a remnant of goatskin or the skin of a rat caught by the boy himself and prepared by himself. The skin is cleverly attached to the calabash with strong thorns. Small boys delight in walking round, tapping out a rhythm on a toy drum, sometimes executing a few dance steps. Another instrument they like to copy is the *kolog*, a single-string fiddle. I once saw a boy of about 6 singing to a ' fiddle ' which consisted of a large bow made of a green stick and a thread of grass—the ' fiddle '—and a smaller bow of the same materials—the ' bow '. A bow of the very same sort with a short piece of thick reed as arrow is the 4- to 6-year-old's introduction to the handling of bow and arrow. They very soon develop an accurate aim at a dozen yards or so. Play of this kind is generally very egocentric. I have watched groups of children playing side by side—a boy with a ' drum ' absorbed in his banging, another lying on his back absorbed in fantasy, a couple of little girls playing at housekeeping—all indifferent to one another's activities.

857 The little girl of 3 to 6 plays in much the same way at times; but
868 she is already being drawn into the family play of slightly older children, and, like the small boy with the toy bow, she tends to mimic simpler features of older girls' play when she is playing alone. Hence one often sees a little girl of this age sitting and playing at ' grinding millet '—one stone as metate, a smaller stone as muller, and a handful of sand or a potsherd as the grain.

Play in early childhood. Between the ages of about 6 and 10 the play of both sexes becomes more social and more complex. This is the period when the child is beginning to co-operate in real economic activities, subject to real responsibility, and is acquiring a knowledge of his social space. His or her play reflects these experiences and reflects also the interests and activities characteristic of the stage of maturity just ahead of it. There is, in all Tale children's play, this feature of looking ahead, as it were, experimenting tentatively with what lies just beyond the present psychological horizon.

During this period the younger children, both boys and girls, have charge of the goats, scare the birds from the newly planted fields and the crops, run errands, nurse the infants, and so forth. The boys help

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On any day in the dry season or the first half of the rainy season one can find a group of girls playing at housekeeping. Most commonly they consist of a group of sisters and ortho-cousins—two to four active participants with, perhaps, a couple of infants attached. Often one or two small boys of about 5 or 6 are in their company, sharing in their play or absorbed in their own separate play. In play, as in the simple economic duties, there is as yet no marked sex dichotomy at this age; and small boys are not ridiculed for 'grinding grain' and 'cooking porridge', or small girls for 'building houses' in play. The girls generally constitute a mixed age group, varying from 6 to 10–11 years, for even those who are already capable of real cooking enjoy playing at it. When they are of about equal maturity their play tends to be loosely organized. Each cooks for herself, but they help one another, lending one another 'utensils', 'grain', 'firewood', and exchanging 'dishes of porridge' like co-wives. When one girl is older than the others she tends to take the lead, and the smaller girls assist her on the pattern of daughter helping mother in real cooking. Infants are 'our children'; and reliable informants have told me that small boys are said to be the 'husbands'—but I have never observed boys being addressed thus, though I have watched housekeeping play very frequently. According to my observation, it is merely implied in the manner of distributing the 'cooked porridge', which follows the pattern of family feeding. Older girls sometimes introduce dolls as the 'children'—clay figures of people made by themselves or, more usually, for them by their brothers.

The essentials of the play consist in 'grinding flour', 'cooking sauce' and 'porridge', and 'sharing out' the 'food'. Every feature of the real processes is mimicked, but with the most ingenious imaginative adaptations. A pair of flattish stones or a boulder and a large pebble serve as 'grindstones'. For pots, dishes, calabashes, and ladles various things are used—old sherds chipped into roughly circular pieces the size of a half-crown or crown, fragments of old calabashes, the husks, whole or bisected, of *molomɔk* or *kalɔmpoo*, spherical fruits of common trees varying in size from that of a large marble to that of a cricket ball, and even old tins or bits of tins, while some girls make little pots of clay. Pebbles make a fire-place, a thin piece of millet-stalk is the stirring-stick, some dried grass the firewood.

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857 Sometimes a real fire is lit, but usually it is merely imagined. Real
●524 grain is never used in such play—it is too valuable to waste thus, as
868 the children themselves would be the first to insist. A piece of potsherd pounded up or a handful of sand serves as grain; but a much more realistic effect is sometimes achieved by using dry baobab stamens. These can be 'winnowed' and the 'grain' ground. Green weeds and leaves are vegetables.

The children play with great zest and earnestness, yet never forget that it is but play. As they grind they hum in a low voice a grinding song they have heard from mother or elder sister. They examine the 'flour' to see that it is fine enough, try to get the right proportion of water, stir the 'porridge' thoroughly, 'dish' it out with scrupulous fairness. There is a constant interchange of conversation and commands to the smaller children: 'Bring me that dish', 'Lend me your broom', 'That's my firewood', 'Don't stir so fast', 'Come and fetch your porridge', and so on. As a rule they play together most amicably. I have observed arguments in such groups about who should do some task or another, but never quarrels. There is real co-operation, based on a distribution of tasks in play.

Such play is occasionally associated with a 'house' built of mud by a brother who often does not share the play, or actually uses the 'house' for his cattle play while his sisters are 'cooking' nearby.
[864] It is said, also, that housekeeping play sometimes branches into sexual play, little boys and girls pretending to be husband and wife and trying to copulate. Detailed inquiry shows that this is not common.
[836] The usual method of sexual experimentation at this stage of development follows the pattern of adolescence. Small boys 'woo sweethearts' with little gifts, and sexual experiments occur in connexion with dancing or by chance opportunities.[1]

Girls' housekeeping play ceases with the beginning of pubescence. Not only are they by then already taking a full share in real housekeeping but their interests are turning to youths and marriage. Housekeeping play, in which the child rehearses the interests which it has as yet neither the skill nor the degree of social development to satisfy, and expresses the wishes which pubescence brings near to realization, has served its purpose.

[1] See my paper on 'Kinship, Incest and Exogamy', loc. cit.

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The corresponding play of boys at this stage is 'cattle-keeping'. It occurs more sporadically than the girls' play, particularly with older boys; but as much fantasy and invention go into it. Sometimes, indeed, it seems like an overt day-dream of leisure hours. One boy alone, or two, usually play. When the group is bigger more boisterous or recreational play ousts it—they wrestle, shoot arrows, gamble with ground-nuts, or at certain seasons pitch bangles and hoops of plaited reed. Boys of all ages are far less placid than girls.

The 'cattle' play involves constructing a 'house' in which the 'gateway' and the 'stable' are prominently indicated and finding something to serve as 'cattle'—sheep and goats never seem to enter. These activities, and moving the cattle about in and out of the 'stable', with murmured remarks in monologue or addressed to a companion, constitutes the play. I have never been able to record this accompanying speech as I have always had to watch cattle play from a distance. Boys say that it is 'about bulls and cows'.

'Cattle' play has more of pure fantasy and less reproduction of real activities than 'housekeeping' play. Sometimes the 'house' and 'stable' are built of mud—a circular 'wall', 9 or 10 inches in diameter and 2 inches high, with a space left for the 'gateway', and a smaller circle of mud adjoining it as the 'stable'—to last for a whole dry season. Often it is constructed *ad hoc*—two circles drawn in the sand or made of heaped-up sand may be enough. A great variety of objects serve as 'cattle'. Boys who like modelling may make clay figures of cows and bulls for their play; bits of sticks, leaves of a common shrub which can be opened so as to stand up on their edges, pebbles, and other things are used. Yet despite the meagre materials and the paucity of mimetic content the play fascinates boys from the age of 5 or 6, when they are still too young to go out with the herds, to about 12, when they may be full-blown herd-boys. Even if their families have no cattle and they have never followed a herd regularly, they play at it. The interest and identification are active nevertheless.

At this stage, too, domestic ritual begins to be reflected in the play of boys. A boy's or girl's schema of ritual and religious ideology at the age of 9 or 10 includes the main structural principles of the system. As his knowledge has been acquired by attending at sacrifices, he knows most about the ritual acts and conventional formulas connected

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857 with sacrifice and least about the beliefs and theories. He is familiar
524 with all the concepts of Tale religion and magic but cannot assign
869 them accurately to their relevant contexts. He knows that ancestor spirits and medicines are different, and can even describe some of the latter by their functions, but cannot elucidate these differences. He knows also and believes that health, prosperity and success depend on mystical agencies, that sickness, death, and misfortune are caused by them, and that sacrifices must be made to placate them or to expiate offences. He has heard talk of all this and seen consultations of diviners. As an infant, perhaps, he has been called by his mother to get off a partition wall 'lest the spirits push you off', or has seen food put out 'for the spirits' during the ritual festivals. He knows what different types of shrines look like and what are their appurtenances. But it is surface knowledge, confused in details and full of gaps.

857 Ritual is men's business, though women are well versed in it.
524 Hence it emerges mostly in the play of boys and not of girls. Signifi-
869 cantly, it is permitted till pubescence, that is, as long as a boy is not
781 likely to take a responsible part in real ritual. After that he is liable to
788 have to accept an ancestor spirit demanding real sacrifices and may no longer play at it. At 13 or 14 years of age, when a boy's ritual schemas approximate those of an adult, he fully understands and acquiesces in this prohibition. It suggests, however, that playing at ritual has a different value for children than actual ritual has for adults. Children share the adults' interest in ritual and accept its prescriptions, but not the adults' emotional relationship to ritual. In their play they express this interest and their identifications, rehearse their knowledge, and integrate it with the rest of their educational achievements.

857 Small boys build shrines a few inches high for themselves in a corner
524 of the cattle-yard. They take great pains to achieve verisimilitude and
869 neatness, and their inventiveness is remarkable. *Kalmpoo* husks are turned into medicine-pots; fragments of calabash or potsherd represent the hoe-blade which is essential to many ancestor shrines; a pronged twig is a shrine's 'tree'; the tail of a stillborn kid or lamb, tied with string and feathers in the same way as adults do, is a shrine's 'tail', another object commonly dedicated to real shrines. There are 'roots' —of grass—as in adult medicine-pots, and other appurtenances.

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Whenever they build miniature houses, during the building season, 857
' shrines ' are added and, as in real life, each has his own. 524

Play with these shrines is woven into other play activities, and it 869
revolves around sacrifice. When a small boy goes out hunting for fieldmice or birds, if he happens to have a ' shrine ' he will ' give it water ', i.e. pour a libation to it. Ashes represent flour, which is stirred up in water as in a real sacrifice. He invokes the shrine, ' My father ' (but never mentioning names as in real sacrifice since his own father is probably still alive), ' accept this water and grant that I have successful hunting. If I kill an animal, I will give you a dog.' Some time later he may catch a live mouse, and when he has played with it to satiety he ' sacrifices ' it on his shrine—this is the promised ' dog '. A nestling bird found alive is ' sacrificed ' as a ' fowl ' or ' guinea-fowl '. If he finds a live mouse or bird by chance it will always be taken home and ' sacrificed ' thus before it is cut up and eaten. Taboos like those of adults are invented for his shrines. Fetishes, like those of adults, accept only red and black ' fowls '; other shrines only white ones. Siikaani, a small boy of about 7 or 8, built him- [778
self a *loo* fetish, which can be dispatched to ' tie up ' any one 789]
who might interfere with one's enterprises. Siikaani pretended to use his *loo* to keep the parents of his ' sweetheart ' out of the way when he went to see her—a frequent use of a real *loo* by young men.

Of the imaginative and constructive play produced as a response 857
to current social activities in which children co-operate, I shall 524
instance only building. During the building season a favourite pre- 868
occupation of the children is to build miniature rooms or houses. It is a co-operative group enterprise, boys and girls frequently working together, led by a boy of about 12–13. It is carried on in the intervals between helping the men. Sometimes they are content to build only walls, a few inches high, but when the leader is keen they undertake a complete replica of a house—walls a foot or more high, several rooms properly arranged, a roof, a beaten inner court, and shrines. The work goes on for days on end and needs planning and organization. The girls and smaller boys make the swish and roll it into pellets, the older boys do the actual building, often with extraordinary skill. When the ' house ' is built and roofed and the walls have dried, if the

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enthusiasm for building still lasts, the girls plaster the walls and beat the inner court in the way they have learnt by assisting their mothers with these tasks in connexion with the real house.

Children's arts and crafts have a play value in that they are practised purely for pleasure and have a seasonal incidence. But they demand considerable skill of eye and hand, and individual differences in ability are noticeable. Towards the end of the rainy season a strong and supple reed springs up in profusion along the watercourses. Young people and children pluck these reeds to plait bangles, necklets, small panels to hang over the chest as decorations, and waistbands. These things are worn by young and old at the festival dances. But whereas the young men and women plait sporadically a few things for themselves, their sweetheart, or a child, children do so continuously and absorbedly. From July to September one sees them sitting about or strolling about in small groups, plaiting reed decorations. The boys have a game played by tossing or bowling the reed bangles and waistbands at a mark. A group plays, and the winner collects all. Girls of all ages love decking themselves from head to foot in this reedware. The technique of plaiting these articles, which is the same as that employed in the manufacture of a number of utilitarian objects, is fairly elaborate. It is gradually learnt between the ages of about 8 and 11.

Less widely practised is the art of modelling clay figures. Girls sometimes model, but it is chiefly a diversion of boys. Cattle and other animals, humans, horses accoutred and with riders astride are the usual subjects. A taste for modelling appears to depend on talent to a great extent. Many boys never acquire the art; others take such delight in it that they devote the whole dry season to producing dozens of clay figures for themselves, brothers and sisters, and friends. Gifted boys model extremely cleverly. I knew two boys of 12 or 13, sons of a chief, who made clay horses and manufactured saddlery and trappings of old rags and bells and ornaments of pieces of tin to adorn the figures. Older boys or youths teach small boys by correcting errors they make in modelling; but I have never found a boy of under 8 or 9 years able to model well.

Play from pubescence to adolescence. The last stage of childhood coincides with the rapid absorption of the child into the economic